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Message Text

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CHEROKEE FOR AMB SCRANTON ONLY

FOLLOWING REPEAT GENEVA 8668 ACTION SECSTATE 01 NOV 76

QUOTE

S E C R E T GENEVA 8668

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CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM SCHAUFELE

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR RH UK
SUBJ: INDEPENDENCE DATE AS RHODESIA CONFERENCE ISSUE

1. FIXING A DATE OF INDEPENDENCE FOR MAJORITY RULE HAS BECOME AT LEAST TEMPORARILY, THE MAJOR CONFERENCE ISSUE. WHILE THE BRITISH WERE TRYING TO NEGOTIATE MUGABE'S AND NKOMO'S REQUESTS FOR CLARIFICATION OF BRITAIN'S ROLE IN RHODESIA AND MAKING SURE THE OPENING SESSIONS OF THE CONFERENCE PROCEEDED SMOOTHLY, RICHARD WAS BEING URGED TO

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SETTLE THE QUESTION OF A DATE OF INDEPENDENCE AS THE FIRST

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ITEM ON THE CONFERENCE'S SUBSTANTIVE AGENDA. WE KNOW THE OBSERVER DELEGATIONS WERE PRESSING THE POINT. CHONA DISCUSSED IT WITH WISNER IN THEIR MEETING.

2. ON SATURDAY, THE BRITISH DECIDED TO PURSUE THE SUBJECT OF A DATE OF INDEPENDENCE WITH SMITH. SMITH DID NOT REJECT THE BRITISH PROPOSAL AND WITH HIS AGREEMENT RICHARD DISCUSSED THE MATTER WITH THE NATIONALISTS. RICHARD'S APPROACH CLARIFIED THEIR THINKING AND AS A RESULT THE DATE FOR INDEPENDENCE HAS NOW EMERGED AS A MINIMUM AFRICAN DEMAND.

3. THE SELECTION OF THIS ISSUE HAS MERIT. IT IS CLEAR FROM OUR DISCUSSIONS THAT THE NATIONALISTS BELIEVE SMITH NEEDS TO MAKE SOME MOVE WHICH WILL CLARIFY THE ATMOSPHERE AND PERMIT THE CONFERENCE TO SETTLE DOWN AND DISCUSS THE FORMATION OF THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT--THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH THE DELEGATIONS CAME TO GENEVA. A DATE FOR INDEPENDENCE AND MAJORITY RULE IS IMPLICIT IN THE FIRST OF THE FIVE POINTS AND SMITH'S CONFIRMATION OF A DATE WOULD NOT MOVE HIM BEYOND THE FRAMEWORK OF OUR UNDERSTANDINGS. BASICALLY SMITH HAS AGREED THAT INDEPENDENCE WILL COME WITHIN TWO YEARS OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INTERIM GOVERN-MENT. HE HAS EVEN ALLOWED IN PUBLIC A DATE COULD BE SET EARLIER IF THE TRANSITION PROCEEDS SMOOTHLY. HOWEVER, HE HAS MADE CLEAR THAT HE REGARDS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT TO BE THE FIRST PRIORITY AND THE SELECTION OF A DATE A SECOND PRIORITY.

4. PICKING A DATE OF INDEPENDENCE AS THE FIRST SUBSTANTIVE ISSUE HAS COMPLICATING ASPECTS. SMITH DOES NOT WANT TO MAKE FURTHER CONCESSIONS AT THIS POINT--AT LEAST UNTIL HE IS CONVINCED THAT THE AFRICANS ARE PREPARED TO NEGOTIATE SERIOUSLY. HE MAY HAVE CONCLUDED THAT HE CANNOT CARRY HIS CONSTITUENCY UNLESS THE AFRICANS RE-CIPROCATE. MOREOVER RAISING THE DATE FOR INDEPENDENCE NOW SURFACES THE THORNY ISSUE OF WHAT EACH PARTY MEANS BY MAJORITY RULE. SMITH'S PERCEPTION IS CERTAINLY NOT THAT ASSUMED BY THE AFRICANS. HE PROBABLY WANTS TO HOLD OUT FOR A VERY LIMITED FRANCHISE.

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5. SINCE THE QUESTION OF A DATE HAS BEEN RAISED, IT WILL NOT GO AWAY. I HAVE REMINDED RICHARD THAT SMITH SHOULD NOT BE GIVEN THE IMPRESSION HE IS BEING ASKED TO CONCEDE A POINT WITHOUT SOME SORT OF QUID PRO QUO. I ALSO TOLD HIM THAT SMITH WOULD NEED SOME ASSURANCE THAT THIS DEMAND WOULD NOT BE FOLLOWED BY OTHER PRECONDITIONS. I DID SUGGEST TO SMITH THAT HE SEARCH FOR AN EXPLICITLY

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CONDITIONAL FORMULA WHICH MIGHT SATISFY THE NATIONALISTS.
HE TOLD ME HE WOULD REFLECT ON MY SUGGESTION BUT I
DO NOT BELIEVE HE WILL MOVE YET.

6. I HAVE ALSO URGED RICHARD NOT TO LET THE CONSUL-
TATIONS BREAK DOWN IF NO AGREEMENT IS REACHED. I
SUGGESTED HE MERELY SUSPEND INTER-DELEGATION MEETINGS
UNTIL THE CONDITIONS FOR AN AGREEMENT ARE IMPROVED.
HE HAS ASSURED ME HE WILL ADJOURN FORMAL MEETINGS IF
THE SUBJECT GETS OUT OF HAND.

7. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT SOME SORT OF FORMULA WILL HAVE
TO BE FOUND TO RESOLVE THIS ISSUE. I WOULD PREFER THAT
THE CONFERENCE SETTLE ON A RANGE OF DATES RATHER THAN
A FIXED DATE. ONE FORMULATION MIGHT BE "WITHIN ONE YEAR
AFTER THE CONFERENCE SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETES ITS DELIBERA-
TIONS, PROVIDED THAT THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT DRAFTS A
CONSTITUTION BY THAT TIME." I ALSO BELIEVE SMITH SHOULD
MAKE HIS AGREEMENT CONDITIONAL ON THE NATIONALISTS'
NOT RAISING ANY OTHER PRECONDITIONS BEFORE THEY SETTLE
DOWN TO NEGOTIATE THE STRUCTURE AND POWERS OF THE
INTERIM GOVERNMENT.

8. THE POTENTIALLY MORE TROUBLESOME ISSUE OF THE
FRANCHISE LIES AHEAD. I HAVE ADVISED RICHARD TO AVOID
THIS QUESTION AND ALTHOUGH THE NATIONALISTS HAVE RAISED
IT THEY ARE NOT FOR THE MOMENT PURSUING IT. IF IT
EMERGES, THE QUESTION OF THE FRANCHISE COULD STALL THE
CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS INDEFINITELY. MUZOREWA IS PUSHING
ONE MAN, ONE VOTE AND WE KNOW SMITH SUPPORTS A HEAVILY
QUALIFIED FRANCHISE WITH A BARE AFRICAN MAJORITY. I
WILL CONTINUE TO URGE THE BRITISH TO SUBORDINATE THE
QUESTION OF A FRANCHISE BUT BELIEVE I SHOULD SUPPORT
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THEM AND PURSUE QUIETLY AND PRIVATELY AN ACCEPTABLE
AND CAREFULLY CONDITIONED FORMULA FOR A DATE OF
INDEPENDENCE.CATTO.
UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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